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Plymouth car dealer ordered to repay customers for excessive fees

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INDIANAPOLIS – A Plymouth car dealer will have to pay over \$130,000 after being accused of overcharging customers.

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Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson and Attorney General Greg Zoeller on Monday announced a settlement with The Auto Park of Plymouth after a joint state investigation that found clients were being excessively overcharged by The Auto Park for paperwork.

The state says The Auto Park was charging customers an exorbitant document preparation fee as a condition of the sale and delivery of a motor vehicle. The Auto Park has agreed to reimburse customers for more than \$130,000.

“Thanks to a vigilant customer who read the fine print, about 3,800 customers will get some of their money back,” said Lawson. “This is another example of the great partnership between (the Secretary of State and Attorney General’s) offices for the benefit of Indiana’s consumers.”

The investigation began when a consumer complained about charges labeled “doc fee.”

After reviewing the documents, investigators were able to determine that the doc fees on a high volume of sales were not capable of being reasonably related to document preparation and therefore excessive. Indiana law requires doc fees to be disclosed, negotiated, reflective of actual expenses and noted on the purchase agreement.

“Buying a vehicle can be a complex and expensive purchase, and that is why it’s important to read and understand the entire written agreement before signing,” Zoeller said. “Document preparation fees are not required by the state, so consumers should ask what the charge entails and try to negotiate the price.

Customers who were charged a document preparation fee of \$228 between November 2010 and November 2012 will receive a refund of \$34 from The Auto Park. Refunds will be mailed directly to eligible customers.

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